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FIRST PERSON

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Ghazal gives solace from mental stress

Music is a remedy for mental tensions. In this era of intense and highly volatile society where everything is changing so fast and to keep pace with the changing times has become a sturdy task, music gives great solace to the body and the soul. When speaking of music, it would be harsh on my part if I don't mention the importance of *ghazals*, because I was born and brought up in it.

I hail from a family where *ghazal* singing has been a tradition. If I am not wrong, it was due to our family background that I developed a passion for singing *ghazals*. My father Late Ratanchand Verma, who was called a '*Ghazal* King: during his time was my *Guru*. I learnt from him the techniques of *ghazal* singing not as a son would do but as a disciple. I feel that *ghazal* is the only platform to express one's feelings and emotions. *Ghazal* should be sung in a traditional way based on classical main drawback is that the present generation prefer the shortcut way for fame and success. The main reason behind this is the westernisation, which I feel, will not last long because our tradition of music is mainly classical based.

Regarding my taste of music, I like only non-filmi *ghazals* because it follows the main definition and theory of the *ghazal* with classical base and Urdu *talafuz*. It is a pity that only a handful of *ghazal* singers of modern times are following these principles. In olden days, *raag* based songs were sung by the *ghazal* singers, but now, the modern singers are blindly after the trends rather than quality. This I feel is mainly due to the influence of western culture. Moreover, due to the present trend of the growing demand of albums, some of the *ghazal* singers have painstakingly taken to making of private albums. In doing so, they are also deviating from the path of folk music and *raag*. I would like to mention that it is from the folk music that the *raag* is derived. This type of music doesn't have feelings and attachment which one could get only through *ghazal*. Moreover, now a days, it has become something next to impossible for the family members to watch and enjoy the music together.

Just imagine a situation of being tensed, under such circumstances, if you play a western music, it will not give you mental peace. But instead if you go for light music or *ghazals*, it will definitely give you the much-sought solace. In short I would like to say that *'Ghazal chain deta hai, aur western music bechain karta hai'*.

Despite talent and quality, the scope for *ghazal* singers in Bhilai is very limited as the people of this place are not accustomed with Urdu *zubaan*, *laikari* and classical *raaga*. Hence for the younger generation who opts to make a career in *ghazal* singing, its my sincere advise to have patience, because the path for success is full of thorns.

AS TOLD TO JEROME FERNANDEZ

(The author is a renowned ghazal singer and TV artist).